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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet summarizes agenda of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for professional board certification and suggests school reform measures to be implemented by chief state executives. Governors are urged to tell the board their opinions, to encourage debate about reforming existing teacher licensing standards, to look for obstacles in state regulations and practices, to challenge teacher educators and back challenges with money, to enlist the help of school boards in the teacher recruitment effort, to make sure the school approval process supports teaching and learning, to urge teachers to acquire National Board certification, to find out whether minority teacher recruitment efforts are working, and to confront the organization problems of schools and encourage others to help. (JAM)

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What a Governor Can Do

National Governors' Association
Center for Policy Research

Results in Education Series

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Governors supported the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in our education report, *Time For Results*, and again in the sequel, *Results in Education*, 1987. Now the board has begun its work. Is there more we should do? I think so.

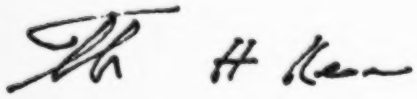
Clearly, we need not wait for the national board. There is much we can do to strengthen teaching. *Time for Results* presented ten ideas, and many of us have already acted on that list. This booklet suggests other actions that will enable a state to keep pace with change and to be ready when the national board standards appear.

But while we won't wait for the national board, there are reasons why we should work with it. Governors are interested in the national board because we share an interest in teacher standards. Licensing teachers is a fundamental state responsibility and standards are at the heart of it. A teaching license is the state's guarantee to the public that a teacher possesses the basic competence to enter the classroom. We take that seriously.

We also know that the reputation of a state's schools affects its ability to attract and keep able teachers. Recruitment depends on standards, too. Recruitment depends on our ability to present teaching as a professional opportunity in every respect. But state action alone cannot create a profession.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is concerned not with the state function of teacher licensing, but with voluntary professional certification. Most professions have such a standards board; until May 1987, teaching did not. Professional certification demands a level of competence far higher than that possessed by the licensed beginner. Board certification will be different from state licensing. State licensure will continue as a prerequisite for teaching, while professional board certification will offer an option to teachers who would like to be recognized for what they know and can do as first class practitioners. Both will exist in parallel as they do in most other professions.

The national board represents a major opportunity for teachers to join with state and local policymakers to set the professional standards for teaching. It represents a major opportunity for the states because it provides both a system to recognize and advance the professional talent of teachers and access to better assessment techniques. Governors can help realize these opportunities.



Thomas H. Kean
Governor of New Jersey
Chairman, NGA Task Force on Teaching, 1985-86
Member, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

What is the National Board?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a nongovernmental, not-for-profit board with 64 members. A majority are teachers, including leaders in teacher unions and subject area associations, and teachers noted for excellence in the classroom. Among the other members are school administrators and local board members, former and current state Governors, teacher educators, children's advocates, and business leaders.

What unites them is an effort to answer two fundamental questions: What should professional teachers know? What should professional teachers be able to do? In short, they will develop high, rigorous, and fair standards for teaching and create ways to determine when candidates meet those standards.

The national board will not only develop professional standards in the major subject areas, but also a system to offer voluntary professional certification to those who meet the standards. It is important for teachers to embrace those professional standards, and they probably will if they can help design them.

Why is the national board so important? Americans need to be much better educated than they are today. That will require great teaching and schools that foster teachers' talents. Effective teaching is complex and difficult. It is time to acknowledge this fact to both the profession and the public. Doing so will raise the status of teaching and help schools attract and keep able teachers. It will support teachers' efforts to develop professionally. It will help schools become

more effective. It will make it possible to reinvent schools for modern times.

What is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Doing Now?

The national board will not issue the first certificate to a teacher for several years, but a lot of careful thinking about policy must be done now. Here is a summary of the board's agenda:

- ***What Will Certified Teachers Represent?*** What kind of knowledge and skill will they have? Will they be deeply educated themselves? Will they understand how children learn? Will they care deeply about all children? Will they balance knowledge of their subject with their skill in conveying that knowledge?

- ***What Should the Basic Structure of the Certificate Be?*** Should there be one certificate, or more than one representing different levels of skill and knowledge? And in what subjects should the board offer certificates? Or would an entirely different kind of structure work better? Should certificates recognize different age levels of students, or might there be a certificate that recognizes skill and knowledge common to all teachers, with an additional component to recognize what is particular to one area or subject?

- ***How High Will the Standards Be?*** Will they be attainable by all teachers once they become proficient or will they be attainable only by a few experts?

- ***How Will Candidates Show That They Meet the Standards?*** There may be a combination of ways to do this, including a general test of knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences, presentation of a portfolio of various kinds of work, completion of a series of exercises in an assessment center, and a residency in a school. Each of these components raises complex problems of policy and design. For example, what test of liberal arts would they use? What would an assessment center for teaching do?

  What kind of residency program would suffice, and how would a school oversee it? The national board will soon begin to design the research program needed to develop the assessment system. The national board will have the benefit of research funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York at Stanford University and a number of other institutions.

- ***What is the Connection Between Board Certification and Teacher Education?*** Teacher education is changing too, partly because of action in the states and partly because of changes within the teacher education community. Should the certificate represent completion of a particular type of program? Some say yes, while others want to encourage alternative approaches to teacher education. Some relationship between the certificate and teacher educators is inevitable. In the years ahead, a program whose graduates could not attain professional certification would have trouble finding students. In many more subtle ways, teacher education will influence the standards of the board and vice versa.

- ***How Will the Teacher Assessment System Reach the Teachers?*** Clearly, there will have to be some kind of regional or state level capacity to assess candidates for the certificate. Just as clearly, the board will have to decide how to ensure that the standards are consistent throughout.

What Governors Can Do

If these questions get the answers they deserve, Governors will be measurably closer to their goals for school reform in the states. Here is what a Governor can do:

1 ***TELL THE BOARD WHAT YOU THINK.*** The board's agenda is known. State experience is relevant. The list of national board members is at the end of this booklet. Tell board members what you think about the agenda items and encourage other education leaders in the state to do the same.

To be ready to do this, start a discussion in your own state. People already have some basic questions that should be out in the open: Will the national board pre-empt state teacher license standards? No, that is not the purpose of the national board. Will it water down state standards? No. Will their standards be unrealistic? Tough, but attainable. Could they be used to redesign school staffing arrangements and the teaching career itself? Probably. Talk about these things and then talk to board members.

Get the message out that you would value the certificate if it is rigorous. Call on teachers and others to help the board make it so.

2 ***WHAT NOT TO DO.*** Major change is in the wind for teacher standards, and not just because of what the national board is doing. States have been forces for change too. Existing teacher licensing practices, which are based on completing particular courses and scores on paper and pencil tests, are becoming obsolete.

Still, the shape of what will replace current standards is unclear. Don't put things on hold, but don't do what will have to be undone soon. Encourage state licensing bodies to avoid hard positions. Now is not the time, for example, to enhance lifetime licenses. And don't make the board certificate a prerequisite for a state license. The courts have applied a specific standard to tests used as the basis for the teacher license: Does the test measure what candidates now learn in teacher education? Does it test what they now use in the classroom? The court standard rests on the status quo. A forward-looking teacher certificate wouldn't pass that court standard. For the new certificate to work, it has to be voluntary.

Don't confuse "license" and "certificate." When people misunderstand these terms, the discussion falters. License and certificate refer to different spheres of action to build teacher capacity—one is the concern of the states and the other the concern of the profession. One is a minimum standard that protects the public against incompetence and the other will be the mark of

a seasoned, highly skilled professional. Solid and related work needs to be done in both areas in order to get and keep the schools the public wants.

3 ***LOOK FOR OBSTACLES IN STATE REGULATIONS AND PRACTICES.*** Do state regulations encourage or discourage teacher educators and state licensing authorities to think anew about teaching standards? Are the current systems rigid or flexible? Is there more than one way to complete teacher training in your state? Do funding systems or state reviews of teacher programs tend to lock teacher educators into the current way of doing things? Or do they encourage innovation?

Who gets appointed to state panels and boards responsible for teacher standards? Are they aware of the national debate and willing to participate in it, or are they certain of one "best" approach and closed to all others?

Even if your state just completed a major improvement in teacher licensing standards, think ahead to the next step. Look beyond the state teacher test, if one exists, and think about the other ways to foster teacher professionalism, such as the use of peer reviews or supervised internships.

Demand teacher licensing that is based on performance in the classroom, not just completion of certain courses. Support collaborative approaches that involve state education officials, local educators, and higher education.

4 CHALLENGE TEACHER EDUCATORS AND BACK CHALLENGES WITH MONEY. Meet with the entire teacher education community, and that includes arts and science faculty and presidents, as well as the education faculty and deans. Ask what they are doing to make sure the graduates of their programs can meet the national standards, if they choose to do so. Will teacher educators be ready to help veteran teachers who wish to prepare for the certificate? Many experienced teachers won't need that kind of support, but some will.

Do teacher preparation programs stress subject matter as well as how to teach it? Do they provide extensive supervised experience in schools as part of the training? Do schools of education engage the best teachers in the redesign of teacher preparation? Are teacher educators ready to check the curriculum to make sure it covers the topics covered by the developing certificates? Does the state provide financial incentives and the flexibility to the teacher educators to respond to these questions?

Offer to deregulate teacher education, but insist on greater quality in return, and be specific. Abandon the idea of one acceptable "state" teacher education curriculum. Then back the colleges that try to develop strong alternatives and are ready to show results.

Whatever shape the certificate takes, part of the assessment is sure to involve a candidate presenting evidence of having met the standards. Encourage the colleges to think through how

that evidence can be presented. And ask them to tell the board.

Some states license teachers who have completed training programs that are alternatives to the regular college teacher education approach. Make sure that the alternate route candidates will be equipped to get the board certificate, if they want to. This may require providing opportunities for continued study.

5 ***ENLIST THE HELP OF THE SCHOOL BOARDS.*** Local board members and administrators, not Governors, hire teachers. But Governors can set the stage. Talk to local leaders about this most important decision. Ask them to think hard about the kind of teachers they are recruiting. And make it clear that they are accountable for the performance of students. Then make sure they see the connection between student performance and teacher professionalism.

Ask school boards to think about how they can create opportunities for veteran teachers to prepare to meet the national board standards.

In the future, board-certified teachers will be sought eagerly by local boards of education. Anticipate the equity problems that may result if wealthy districts are able to recruit large numbers of these teachers, while poor districts cannot.

6 ***MAKE SURE THE SCHOOL APPROVAL PROCESS SUPPORTS TEACHING AND LEARNING.*** States need to address the quality of schools, whether they call it accountability, district monitoring, or school approval. The fundamental purpose, of course, is to assure the quality of instruction. But school approval is also related to teacher recruitment and retention. The things that make a school work for students—a focus on learning, visionary leadership, strong support from the community—are also things that make a school attractive to professional teachers. Look at the state school approval system from this perspective. Does it tend to create and sustain schools that put the abilities of outstanding teachers to work for the students, or is the reform process really an obstacle to efforts to improve teaching?

7 ***URGE TEACHERS TO GO FOR IT!*** Teachers have lots of questions about the national board. Create opportunities for them to ask questions and get answers. Experienced teachers, for example, have asked why they would need board certification. One way to answer that is to point out that teacher opinion surveys indicate that teachers want opportunities to develop as professionals. Board certification provides such an opportunity.

Teachers also ask why they have to take a "test." The answer, of course, is that they don't. Board assessment will not be a conventional paper and pencil test, but an exacting review of profes-

sional knowledge and skills that will include many different kinds of assessments. And it will be voluntary.

Teachers will need time to think about the certificate. Governors can begin the discussion with them. Challenge teachers to prepare themselves to lead their own profession by joining their colleagues on the board. If your state has an institute to support teachers' efforts to continue their own professional training, look for ways that it can help teachers who want to prepare for the assessment.

8 ***FIND OUT WHETHER MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT EFFORTS ARE WORKING.*** The schools are not attracting their fair share of well trained minority Americans. Look first at the minority recruitment and graduation figures in your state's colleges, regardless of major. Ask state higher education authorities to confront these results. Ask them how they plan to make the results better.

Recruit teachers yourself, and make sure that the recruiting message is heard everywhere. Then make sure that people who hear, can act. Create tuition assistance programs for teachers. Look at the pass rates for minorities on teacher license tests. Ask teacher educators what they are doing to make sure that more minorities are prepared for the license standards. Keep the standards high and search for ways to help more people meet them. But make sure the license standards make sense.

9 ***CONFRONT THE ORGANIZATION PROBLEMS OF SCHOOLS, AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO HELP.*** Professional teachers, board-certified teachers, won't remain in schools that do not allow them to use their training and capabilities. Most observers agree that today's school doesn't work as well as it could for the students or the teachers. The effort to redesign schools must work in concert with the redesign of the teaching profession.

Too many American schools are characterized by conflict over matters of instructional policy that could be more effectively resolved through collaboration. This atmosphere of conflict shapes practices of labor, management, and public agencies, as well as the structure of policies and the overall climate of the school. The result is an unstated determination to try nothing new in times that cry out for a new approach.

Some American schools reflect an older view of work, one that depended on close supervision of largely routine work by a largely unwilling and unskilled work force. If this was ever true of schools, it is certainly not true of high-performing schools today, nor can it be true of the schools that will have to be commonplace in the years ahead. But watch out for the notion that there is one best way to run a school, even in the reform movement. There have to be many ways to run a school that works for students.

Board-certified teachers will expect to work in schools that recognize their greater knowledge and competence. They will expect to be involved

in decisions about curriculum, discipline, scheduling, and other matters that affect the performance of their students. They will demand professional development opportunities that are beyond what we call "in-service training" today. They will expect the opportunity for greater compensation without having to leave the classroom to work as administrators. And they will expect to find building management that is just as competent and professional as they are.

Governors can prepare the way for these teachers and the more effective schools children need. Create pilot projects and learn from the experience, stimulate local experimentation, look for obstacles in state regulations. Challenge the boards, unions, administrators, and teachers to join state policymakers in inventing more productive school organizations.

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James B. Hunt Jr. - Chair
Partner
Poyner and Spruill
Raleigh, North Carolina

James A. Kelly - President
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
Detroit, Michigan

Mary-Dean Barringer
Resource Demonstration Teacher
Wayne County Public Schools
Wayne, Michigan

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Professor of Public Service
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Alan K. Campbell
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Iris Carl
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Brookline Elementary Teachers Center
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National Board Offices

333 West Fort Street
Suite 2070
Detroit, MI 48226
313-961-0830

1320 18th Street, N.W.
Suite 401
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-463-3980

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